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AUTHOR	Ayres, Janet; And Others
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ABSTRACT

This manual describes an educational program for helping rural, small community leaders, decision-makers, and residents analyze their communities, think about alternatives, and plan economic development action strategies. The program is an effort to help communities explore short- and long-term development strategies, gain a vision of their potential, and take control of their own future. It focuses on the use of citizen empowerment, building on existing resources, and the analysis of community strengths and weaknesses. Each of the document's three sections involves a community meeting of about 3 hours. The first unit examines the community's current trends and characteristics in assessing opportunities for economic growth. The second section examines 13 economic development strategies by analyzing risks and benefits of each. The third unit helps communities organize, prioritize, and develop an action plan. It also helps identify and mobilize resources. Three groups of participants and their roles are identified and defined, namely, the planning committee, the development program participants, and the total community. Each section and includes a description of material, equipment, and preparation needs for that section's workshop. Appendices contain charts, graphics, tables, and large-print program headings to illustrate points discussed in the units and corresponding group meetings. (TES)

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